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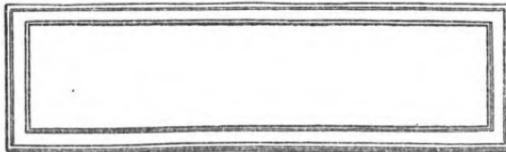
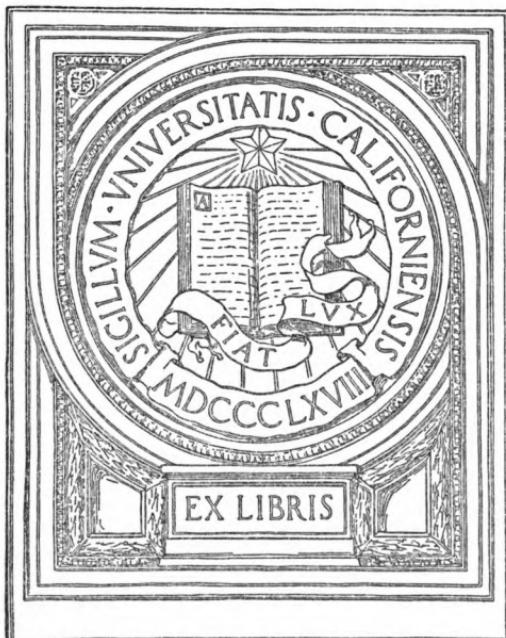
# THE BLOOD STAINED ROSE

A ROMANCE

BY

LILLIAN SINCERE AHRENS

YB 76765







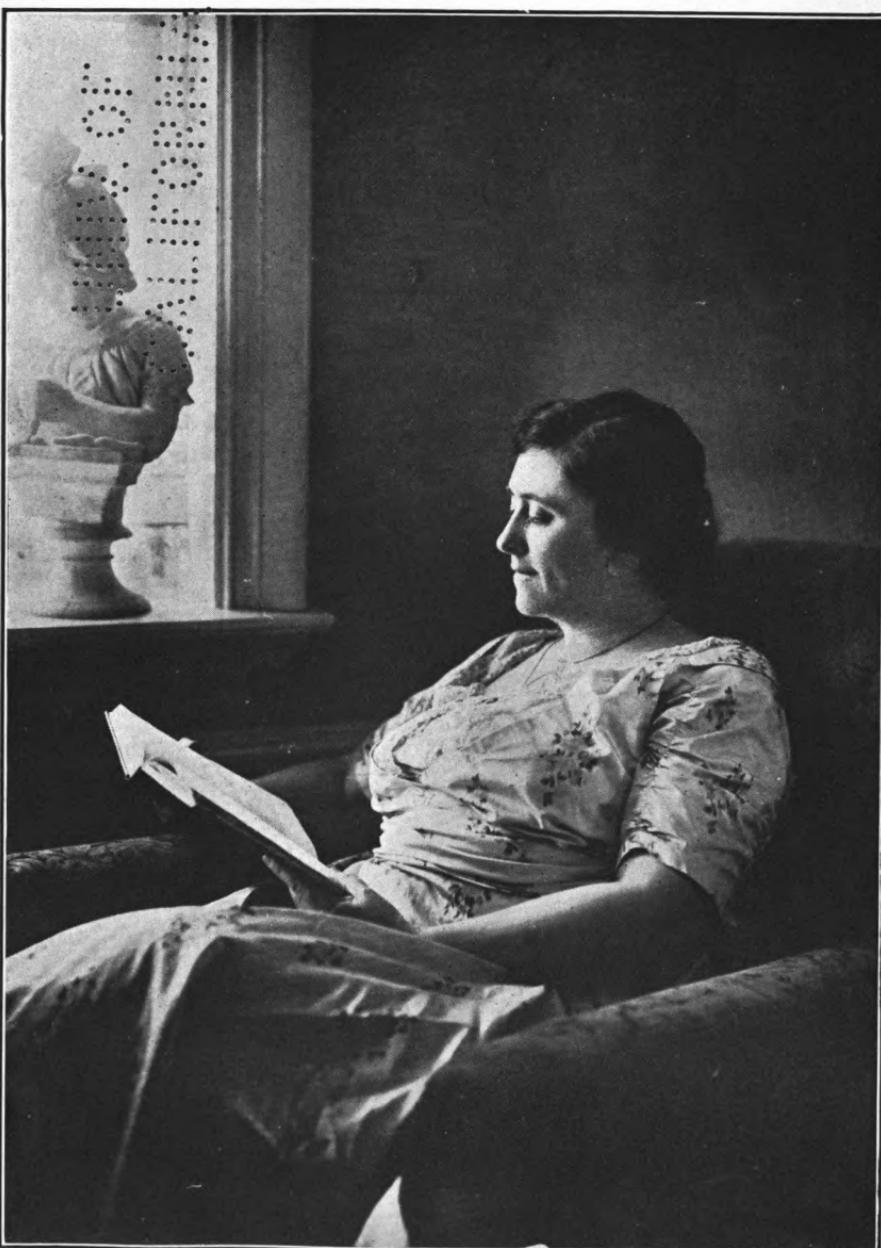




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*Lillian Sincere Ahrens*

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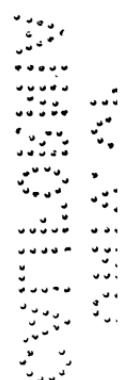
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# THE BLOOD STAINED ROSE

## A ROMANCE

by  
*Lillian Sincere Ahrens*



*"In every stern and unimaginative age, there  
is more danger to be feared from the want  
of romance, than from excess of it."*

\* \* \*

*So, my friend, at this age most opportune,  
A romance laced with smiles and tears,  
I present to thee.*

*If thou would'st thy soul with garlands  
Of ambrosial sweets enchain, I pray thee,  
With my worthy players dwell awhile.*

**—M191836**



## PART ONE.

On a spring morn, aglow with happiness,  
Marian roamed her garden fair, and cried,  
"I seek thee, love; where are thou?"  
The lingering gold of dawn, the violets  
from purple bed,  
The fragrance of the sweets of spring suf-  
fused her thoughts.  
While toying with a rose she pricked her  
hand,  
But undisturbéd, and with playful mien, she  
stained the white rose red.  
Then tossing it with childish mirth, she cried,  
"The youth who this rose finds, I'll wed!"  
The encrimsoned rose lay prone. Marian  
on her way went singing,

# NO VINTU AMIGOMILAO

10      The Blood-Stained Rose

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But ere she had taken many steps, she paused,

And then she turned; for, having o'erheard her boast,

And lured by the cadence of her voice—

Two youths, as if by magic, from the road appeared,

And with accord made haste to claim the rose.

Now Marian, noting two hands about to clash,

To a nearby rose bower hied.

Then one youth spoke. " 'Tis strange," he said,

"This meeting, as by God divined."

The other sprang away, as though the calloused hand

Had been an adder's fang, held out to him.

“Nay sir, no harm I ween, to either—

Thou’rt heir to yonder rose, perhaps, and  
too, a prince thou art,

Still, must thou worthy prove thyself.”

The prince, stung to the quick, cried,

“Thou ruffian. One more word and thou’lt  
go

By my sword o’er yonder cliff!”

“Nay, thou would’st not pierce this heart,  
though rough;

Nor still a tongue not taught to say fine  
words.

Thine eyes speak tenderly. And, strangely,  
as I gaze on thee,

I think, though fine, thou’rt very like myself.

A look! A word! I beg thee! Wilt not  
speak?

Then bear with me until my story's told—  
I'll not be long in telling it; and then,  
If proved kin by my story,  
Then hast thou won, mayhap, the trophy  
sought."

The handsome prince laughed loud!  
" 'Tis well, mad man, but make thy story  
short!"

(And now it came to pass that Marian's  
friend,

Her lady in waiting, by name of Enid known,  
Appeared on the castle step, in search of  
Marian.

She gazed around with shaded eyes,  
And saw two youths standing as in dispute,  
And from her hiding place a glimpse of  
Marian's skirt.

Well knowing how the intruders to evade,  
In time to hear the story, she reached the  
bower.)

“My name is John; by friends I’m Brawny  
called;

My mother? my mother! Ah memory dear!  
Her slender body swayed by grace, her eyes  
love-lit,

And lips that uttered but the sweetest sound.  
‘Tis good to know she was my mother!

Thou look’st as if thou might’st have known  
her,

My mother, with her enkindled soul.

My father a sailor was, under whose rough  
cloak

There beat a heart of fibre fine—

A man whose sleep was lulled by winds,

Who dreamed not only of his ship's fair  
bow,

But all that lay beyond.

A brother had I, a handsome but frail lad.

One day while he lay feeble on his bed,

My mother o'er him bent with tender care,

When suddenly the wild lash on the water's  
edge,

The gull's shrill cry! The rift in the clouds!

Told us The Hawk had come to port,

And my father to sea was called.

‘ ‘Twere well to take him with thee, John,’  
my mother gently said,

‘ Nay, thou’rt not frightened at the thought,

A roughing on the sea will give him life!’

My father looked aghast!

'Thou'rt jesting, wife—would'st part with  
him, thy little one?'

'Take him with thee,' my mother begged.

Thou'l bring him back pink as a rose!

And then, the sacrifice so bravely made, she  
wept

As tenderly my father from the bed lifted  
my brother.

'No tears, dear wife!' he cried,

'I'll bring him back in lively tune; and John,  
Take care of her. 'Twill not be long.'

So, they sailed away, while we were left  
alone.

We waited, waited. And on that dreadful  
day,

When earth and heaven clashed, a message  
came, that read,

'While homeward bound, down went The Hawk with all on board.'

My heart breaks at the thought.

Still we waited—that tragedy of waiting!

Each incoming ship was a hope renewed,  
that they were spared.

'Twas vain. . . .

As years rolled on, my mother aged.

And though she called me oft her all in all,  
I could not be to her what all might be,  
Nor could I bring them back.

To make a matter short, she would not live.

'Bury me, too, at sea,' she begged;  
'There will I find, perhaps, the ones I love.'  
And there she lies, at sea, my mother.

Whereas I seek the two for love of whom  
she died. . . .

And now, as I before thee stand, dear prince,  
Though thou art older grown, thou'rt like  
my brother

More than any I have known."

The story finished, Marian and her friend,  
Deeper amid the roses stole, and stilled their  
sobs.

The prince grew pale, and shuddered as if  
something stirred his soul.

"Now thy story's told; and though with  
eagerness I'd grasp the rose,  
I must abide until I've spoken to the end.

"I too, a lovely mother had," he said,  
"Though only from my father learned;  
Yet in fancy I my mother knew—  
Like as a phantom from another world.

And, ne'er shall I forget, in a ship's bow was  
I laid,  
A frail lad, by the sailors petted much.  
Under their rough, yet tender care, I grew—  
Though not much knowledge from books  
had I, still,  
Amidst the rigging high, I learned the mys-  
tery of the moon;  
For pastime, I heard yarns by sailors spun.  
One called Dan a story told about a prince.  
He said 'Aladine,' (so was I called)  
'A queen I know will some day seek thee out,  
and make thee prince of her domain;  
Thou'l be her solace for her only son,  
Lost in a drunken brawl. I at that time his  
valet was,  
And I so loved the lad, I could not stay.

The queen, heeding my discontent, bade me  
to go.

"Farewell Daniel," she said, "Seek thou for  
me another,

To take his place; let him be of tender years;  
It matters not, if lowly his birth should be;  
Still it becomes a prince to be well knit and  
strong of heart!"'

I laughed at Dan, and at his seaman's tale,  
I vowed no queen was great enough to tear  
me from my father.

'Twas not long after Dan his story told  
That darkness and disaster came.

'Twas as if The Hawk by fear was stirred!  
A hellish element appeared to crush her bow,  
and tear her sail;

My father lashed me to the mast.

And, though I struggled to be free,  
I was like a mouse twixt a cat's jaw,  
So closely was I bound. From the mast,  
In awe, I viewed the bravery of my father,  
As o'er the storm-beaten deck, with fearful  
cry!

He urged his men, till hoarse of voice and  
weak from injury,  
He laid him down to die. 'Aladine, thou'l  
be saved!' he cried.

'I would have waited as I promised her,  
To bring thee back pink as a rose, but now,  
'Tis late, too late! Perhaps thou'l find thy  
mother,  
And thy brother. But blame me not for  
dying,

Ere I brought thee back to her in lively  
tune.'

Then in delirium he tossed, and wrung my  
heart

Crying, 'No tears, dear wife, I'll bring him  
back!'

'Twas pitiful, I begged to die with him.

I tried to break my chains, but vain, all vain!

And, as with glazed eyes he gazed at me,  
It seemed too much, too much, to bear.

As twilight gathered round the death  
doomed ship,

So many wild seas braved, with one last  
throb gave way,

And thinking 'twas the end, weakly I cried,  
'Father! my father!'

Out from the darkness a voice leaped—Dan's  
voice—

‘I'll save thee, lad!’

Then all was dark for many months.

One day I woke to find myself in princely  
robe,

And standing at my bed with men of state,  
Was Dan, the sailor who my fortune told.  
‘I told thee, lad,

A queen would seek thee out and make thee  
prince of her domain.

How may I serve thee now, dear Majesty?’  
he asked,

Kissing my hand with stately grace.

‘Ah, Dan, my friend, still thou my friend  
wilt be;

And too, court jester, to make me merry  
with thy sea yarns gay,

But sometime we shall speak of him, my  
father.' "

After Aladine his story told, and brother was  
sure of brother,

John, a promise to fulfill, lifted the rose  
with tender care,

And placed it in Aladine's hand, saying,

"Yes, thou'rt heir not only to the rose and  
to thy princedom great,

But to the heart of a maiden fair, and too,  
a brother's love,

There is no fairer token I may give

Than this red rose. Wear it upon thy heart,  
my brother: it is thine."



## PART TWO



## PART TWO

The story heard of how the brothers met,  
Marian and her friend, thrilled to the quick,  
Left their hiding a-tremble; and stole  
Along an unseen path of drooping trees.  
Around Marian's soul a sweetness clung,  
Like the fragrance of a rose new born; and  
Enid's heart  
Beat quickly 'gainst her breast.  
At the Castle door they turned; and from  
afar,  
Saw two youths wend their way unto the  
Castle Aladine.  
So it came to pass, at the Castle Aladine,  
John by his brother's sword a knight was  
made;

Tho difficult at first, he the court's manner learned.

And so, a great change in his life was wrought.

As time wore on, Marian found Heart's ease in thoughts of Aladine,

While Enid's head was well nigh filled with dreams of John.

But, alas! love oft is wafted by a fickle wind,  
And is borne astray in the wafting.

So it happened that on one June day,  
Aladine,

By princely duties worn, unaccompanied by  
his brother,

Rode down the castle path, granting his  
steed full rein

To wander at will; and as if by mystic force

He was carried through a wondrous scene,  
in harmony wrought.

Not far off a rising hill bathed in the sun,  
Where lambkins drowsed in the noonday  
heat.

And then he heard the symphony of song-  
sters through the woods,

Felt the soft breeze that stirred the wide  
open petals of roses,

Lingered at a mirror stream by water lilies  
graced,

Reflecting a sapphire sky; and at last,  
Reached the enchanted spot, where first the  
rose awaited him.

Coincidently strange as it may seem, Enid,  
worn by sleepless nights,

Unable to endure the loud beating of her  
heart,

Sought, for repose, this very paradise.

So they met; Aladine with head drawn high  
—noble, serene;

And Enid, forgetting Marian, her soul of  
modesty undressed,

Stood quickly clothed in woman's wiles.

And in this robe she boldly greeted him.

Aladine, caught by the flame within her eye,  
held out his arms.

As lip met quivering lip all save that moment  
was forgot.

Though but a moment, still an eternity it  
seemed to them.

Then gently he loosed his hold and spoke in  
tender terms.

He told her, that, through a Blood Stained  
Rose with abandon tossed,

He found the road to a maiden's heart, and  
too, a brother's love.

Enid in feigned surprise, after a moment  
said,

“Wonderful Aladine, the rose worn near thy  
heart

Was by my own blood stained.”

Then on his shoulder Enid hid her face,  
That in her eyes the lie he might not read.

Once more he held her form in fond embrace,  
And then they parted, vowing with hearts  
and lips, a tryst they'd keep.

‘Twas in the time of their many trysts, that  
Marian,

Wondering at the cold mien of her friend,  
contrived by watchfulness

To solve the riddle. . . .

On one moonlit eve, while wandering from  
the Castle Everywhere  
In search of Enid, Marian stopped with  
sudden fear  
And like a startled fawn fleeing the moun-  
tain-side,  
Knowing the hunter near, hastened from the  
crunching sound  
Of horse's hoofs; but too late to evade the  
intruder,  
For on his steed, outlined against the sky,  
Sat the Prince Aladine.  
'Twas thus the two whom fate decreed were  
justly one, to be,  
Gazed each at other, with soul wrapped, in-  
tent;  
In his eyes was pictured beauty of which he  
had not dreamed.

And she, Ah! ne'er had purer glance been  
lifted to his own.

Aladine slipped lightly from his steed,  
And bowing low o'er Marian's hand, with  
emotion deep,

Spoke of the night coming on. He told her  
As a brother might, it was not wise, so fair  
a maid

Should walk abroad, alone; praying the hon-  
or of accompanying her.

Marian smiled consent. All the way  
He spoke of moon-lit nights, and flower  
paths,

Until at last, reaching Castle Everywhere,  
Marian bade him enter, her guest.  
He followed her.

Meanwhile, Enid perturbed because of Aladine's stay,

Sought him in the usual path, until worn with  
vain seeking,

She reached the Castle gate. It opened wide  
to receive her.

And behold! the Castle Everywhere,

With lords and ladies decked in jewels rare,  
Vied with the stars and lights in shimmering!

Then came the dance with stately grace,

By spirit strings of sweetest music led; and  
laughter,

And lovers' mirth like ripples on a waveless  
sea;

'Twas a scene most beautiful to look on.

But Enid, her face pressed against a pane,  
and her dazed eyes

Gazing at the two who led the dance,  
Felt the blood close round her heart, and  
swooned.

Then, as if by God-given strength restored,  
she reached the castle door;

There pages bore her in and to her room.

At the stroke of twelve, the dance o'er,  
Aladine bade his love farewell,

And promised that they'd meet again. And  
Marian at last,

Having found her love, and thinking it must  
be by the whole world shared,

Sought Enid in her room. And with caresses  
fond,

Marian in joyful tone, spoke of her love.

“Nay, weep not, thou too shall taste the  
sweets of love,

For much he spoke of his brother John.  
Perchance——”

Enid answered not; but into the pillow hid  
her face,

That Marian might not fathom her distress.

And in the days that followed, Aladine was  
'twixt heaven and hell,

Between duty and love, from one to the  
other thrown.

Now John, not knowing of his brother's  
adventures,

Thought strange of his many journeys and  
spoke his fears to Dan.

Two heads, though one a jester's was, proved  
far more wise than one.

It was decreed that John, who in form Alad-  
ine resembled,

Should thus clothe himself and follow him.  
Meanwhile Enid, with jealous rage,  
Contrived to seek Marian's doom by mean  
deceit;  
One day, before her she appeared in feignéd  
grief;  
Marian, with quick sympathy, inquired the  
cause. "Ah me!  
To be for one short hour a princess fair and  
dressed in royal robe  
Would an ambition crown," sighed Enid.  
Said Marian, with trustful mien, "It can be  
done!"  
So, as by magic wand, Enid in royal robe  
was gowned;  
"Mind Enid, for one hour and no more,  
Mayest thou enjoy the present role!" Marian  
gave command;

And Enid with a Judas kiss for Marian's  
favor kind,

Hastened from the Castle Everywhere, a  
tryst to keep with Aladine.

'Tis strange how providence impedes the  
wiles of men;

While Aladine was on his way, Enid to meet  
His steed upreared, and on its hauches stood.

Meanwhile, John, in Aladine's attire was  
seeking him;

Unacquainted with the road, he turned here  
and there, in vain,

Then wended his way unto the Castle gate.

And it so happened that the gate oped wide  
to receive him,

Who in all appearance was his brother  
Aladine.

•

Now Enid, in the garden waiting her tryst  
to keep,

Heard a horse's tread upon the gravel path,  
and thinking

'Twas Aladine, she ran into the road;

She seized the bridle of John's steed, and

With impatient mien inquired the cause of  
his delay.

John abashed at this strain; awaited her  
further speech.

"Thou'rt late, my Aladine! See, I dressed  
in royal robe for thee—

That thou might'st love me more.

Ah! Why hast thou grown cold?.

Have I offended thee, dear love?" she asked.

John, knowing no reply, unable to resist her,  
Took Enid to his heart.

Now Aladine, once more upon his way,  
Urging his steed with well-set spur, and,  
anxiously bespent,

Entered the Castle gate.

Meanwhile, the hour long passed, Marian  
sought her friend.

With claspéd hands and breathing quickly  
drawn,

She made her way as though to certain  
misery.

Now step by step unfolds the well wrought  
plot.

Enid thinking the visitor Aladine, and know-  
ing that his heart.

By right divine, belonged to Marian,  
Branded Marian a snake—saying her beauty  
and soft words

Were but a lure to lead him to his doom.  
Then false tears followed.

“Hast ever heard the story of the Blood  
Stained Rose?

If not, I’ll tell it; perhaps ’twill comfort  
thee.”

At these, John’s words, she thought him  
stricken mad,

For speaking of the Rose as if ’twas some-  
thing new.

Then as though smitten by an unseen hand,  
She gazed at him, wild eyed, inquiring who  
he was

And what his purpose. A moment more,  
The masqueraders having come in contact  
with the truth,

Were seized with sudden fear.

'Twas then, heavy clouds hung in the sky—  
a warning to all treachery.

Aladine from afar, fancied he saw  
Marian in another's arms; that one much  
like himself;

And so with spurs set deep into his steed, he  
vowed revenge!

Heavier grew the clouds, as if the world  
drew near its end.

Enid her head turned quickly and tried to fly  
From what was coming; 'twas not long be-  
fore the brothers met.

And John, white and trembling, begged  
mercy, saying,

"I followed thee, my brother, it is true—  
Thou seemed so unlike thyself, and loving  
thee,

I could not bear to see thee thus."

But Aladine, half blind with rage, unsheathed  
his sword.

Commanding John to draw. "Impostor!"  
cried he,

Laughing at his excuse for treason; thinking,  
of course, Enid was Marian.

"Fight, thou dog," cried Aladine. "Thou  
callest thyself brother?

Nay, thou liest! Thou hast stolen my  
brother's name

And his story. And I believed thee! Oh  
God! I believed thee!"

John, his heart most rent at Aladine's re-  
proach,

Baring his breast, cried, "Strike then if thou  
wilt,

Unsheathed my sword remains; 'gainst thee  
I cannot raise it."

"Coward!" shrieked Aladine, as with a blow  
he felled his brother.

Then Enid with remorse near mad, her face  
averted,

And Marian with saddened heart, coming  
upon the scene,

Stood as if angel struck. Aladine to the  
truth awakening,

Knelt on the ground, and tried to stem the  
precious blood

That flowed from his brother's side. Marian,  
too, prayed him to speak.

Meanwhile, Dan was led by fate to follow  
John

For providence directs the destiny of man,  
leading him on,

Light as a sunbeam, darting here and there,  
And ever along the right road.

O'er the four a cloak of agony fell.

Enid, with contrite heart, sought Marian's  
forgiveness.

Marian, bewildered, replied, "I've trusted  
thee through years, my friend;

Ah, speak not, that I may trust thee still!"

"Nay, but I am guilty! Only I am guilty!"  
Enid cried.

Marian would brook no further speech.  
"Not now;

Not while a brother bleeds," she gently said,  
As, tearing from off her gown a strip of silk,  
She bound the wound. John, gazing upon  
her, murmured,

"Angel, my mother was like thee."

But pity 'twas to see the grief of Aladine.

He from his bosom took the Blood-Stained  
Rose

And placed it in his brother's hand. "Live,  
live," he said.

"And all I own is thine, my brother! Oh,  
my brother!"

Now Dan by presage led, 'mongst them ap-  
peared—and stood

Like a heaven-guided moonbeam

Lingering on a pit, as if to save the passer-by  
To his quick eye their plight revealed,

And knowing that John's disguise was all its  
cause,

He decided on his course, and feigned sur-  
prise;

Inquiring why, as he was full cause of the drama,

He was kept from its rehearsing.

"By my advice, John sought thee, Aladine!

Ah, thou knowest not that I have wandered o'er this garden fair

And, all unseen, have formed this plot.

'Twas a pitiful mistake I made, urging my players to appear in masquerade,

Knowing full well false garbs make playthings out of hearts."

The truth half told by Dan, like a lightning flash,

Was its cause revealed to all, save Marian.

Aladine with gratitude that knew not bounds, Bowed o'er the hand of his friend, and drew it to his lips.

Dan all but swooned at the caress,  
And John, as with new life instilled, vowed  
that he'd live,  
And, a-tremble with happiness, Enid thanked  
Dan and God.

Then a moment passed; and, in that lapse  
of time, Marian,  
Her heart tipped by the arrow, doubt, and  
with throbbing pulse,  
Like the martyr who in the arena has not yet  
felt his soul  
God-kissed, but in fear notes only the lion's  
jaw,  
Gazed at them with a burning question in her  
eyes.  
Though an aeon of time it seemed to her  
who waited to be judged,

'Twas but a moment; for Marian, her soul  
Heaven-swayed,

Took Enid to her heart and called her sister.  
And then, and then, like elements together  
drawn,

Marian found herself in her lover's arms;  
While Enid bent o'er John with tender care.  
Now, conscious only of the sacrifice, Aladine,  
Placed in the jester's trembling hand The  
Blood-Stained Rose.

" 'Tis thine, thou blessed peacemaker, thou  
friend of friends!"

By a formula divine, in that hand a miracle  
was wrought!

For a Power had caused the Rose once more  
to bloom.

The mist cleared and the sun shone down on  
Aladine

As with unsheathed sword he bade the jester  
kneel,

And entitled him a lord.

Now, though the story is at its close, we  
must not miss

The pageant that took place at Castle Every-  
where.

Ne'er was scene more beautiful; with courtier  
train

The wedding party in flower-decked floats,  
And chariots of gold, by proud horses drawn,  
Rode from the Castle Everywhere through  
sylvan paths

O'er hallowed ground to the spot made dear-  
est by the Rose.

There they stopped; and kneeling under an  
ether canopy of blue

They bound themselves in wedlock, soul to  
soul.

Dan, pressing to his heart his full-blown rose  
Low whispered: "Thou wert Blood Stained,  
Not destined to long life, until by virtue  
kissed.

Ah, beauteous one, Heaven christens thee,  
Immortality!"

















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